

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01483 051236Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----051245 042219 /46

P 051111Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2055

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1483

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

FOR NEA/ARN DRAPER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SY
SUBJECT: VISIT OF RABBI HECHT

REF: STATE 47725

1. DELIGHTED WITH NEWS THAT RABBI HECHT'S PLANS HAVE
FIRMED UP TO COME HERE. AM I TO UNDERSTAND THAT
WHEN YOU SAY MEMBERS OF HIS GROUP HAVE "SOME DIRECT
OR INDIRECT INTEREST IN SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY"
THAT THEY THEMSELVES ORIGINATE FROM THIS COMMUNITY;
IF SO, I WILL INCLUDE IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH SARG THAT
THIS VISIT IN PART REPRESENTS RESPONSE TO SUGGESTION BY PRESIDENT
ASAD TO SOLARZ IN EARLY 1975 THAT FORMER MEMBERS
OF COMMUNITY SHOULD COME BACK TO VISIT.

2. I HAVE NEVER BEEN IN TOUCH WITH RABBI YADID IN
ALEPPO BUT ANTICIPATE NO PROBLEM PASSING MESSAGE
THROUGH RABBI HAMRA.

3. AS FAR AS PROGRAM IS CONCERNED, I THINK RABBI HECHT
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 01483 051236Z

SHOULD CALL ON DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS SHOEFI AT
FONMINISTRY. I WILL ALSO SEEK APPOINTMENT FOR HIM WITH
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER AL-KHANI. I, OF COURSE, LOOK
FORWARD TO MEETING RABBI HECHT AND GROUP MYSELF AND
REVIEWING SITUATION IN DEPTH WITH THEM AT BEGINNING OF
THEIR VISIT.

4. UNCERTAINTIES SURFACED IN DCM'S MARCH 3 MEETING WITH COMMUNITY LEADER TOUTAH (DAMASCUS 1470) RAISE IN MY MIND QUESTION OF UTILITY OF CHABOT AND SHALOM VISIT PRIOR TO HECHT'S ARRIVAL. I AM GLAD YOU GOT POINT ACROSS THERE NO POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SARG AT THIS POINT IN TIME BUT I AM CONCERNED THAT THESE TWO WILL COME ANXIOUS TO PRESS FORWARD ON DETAILS WITH WHICH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IS SIMPLY NOT YET PREPARED TO COPE. AT SAME TIME I RECOGNIZE YOU MAY NOT FEEL AT THIS LATE STAGE IT POSSIBLE TO RECOMMEND THEY CANCEL THEIR TRIP. IF SO, EMPHASIZE THEY SHOULD CONTACT EMBASSY ON ARRIVAL. SUBJECT THEIR AGREEMENT I WOULD PLAN NOTIFY SARG PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT IS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR RABBI HECHT'S GROUP.

5. YOU REFERRED IN PARA 4 REFTTEL TO PAPER I HAD GIVEN GOLDRICH. EVEN IF HE PUBLISHES THIS PAPER (AND I HOPE THAT GRUEN WILL SUCCEED IN KEEPING GOLDRICH OUT OF THE MEDIA), I DO NOT BELIEVE IT WILL DO ANY HARM. THE PAPER IN QUESTION WAS SUMMARY OF SIX POINTS FROM THE SHOEFI BRIEFING WITHOUT ANY INTERPRETATION OR GLOSS WHICH SHOEFI GAVE TO THOSE POINTS. (DAMASCUS 306, PARA 2, A-F).

6. RE EMBTEL 49217 YOU WILL HAVE REPORT OF DCM'S MARCH 6 MEETING ON FOLLOWING DAY.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JEWS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAMASC01483
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770076-1042
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770389/aaaadaor.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2cbc12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: 77 STATE 47725
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3196263
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF RABBI HECHT
TAGS: PINT, OTRA, SY, (HECHT, RABBI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2cbc12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009